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Message Text

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71-62
ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 CU-02 ISO-00 MMO-01 CPR-01 PA-01 PRS-01 USIA-06

SS-15 /038 W
---------- 085977
R 291323Z JAN 76
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1748

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SCUL
SUBJECT: GIFT OF VENEZUELAN SCULPTURE TO THE U.S.

1. DURING OUR CONVERSATION JANUARY 22 PRESIDENT CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ RAISED WITH ME THE GOV'S DESIRE TO PRESENT TO THE "GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES" A BICENTENNIAL GIFT EXEMPLIFYING THE CULTURAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF MODERN DAY VENEZUELA. THE GIFT IS TO TAKE THE FORM OF A PIECE OF MODERN "KINETIC" SCULPTURE BY ALEJANDRO OTERO, ONE OF THE COUNTRY'S LEADING ARTISTS. (OTERO DID A SIMILAR PIECE GIVEN BY THE GOV TO COLOMBIA AND NOW STANDING IN A PARK IN BOGOTA. A RETROSPECTIVE EXHIBITION OF HIS WORK IS CURRENTLY SHOWING IN MEXICO CITY.)

2. THE PROPOSED SCULPTURE AS REVEALED IN SKETCHES THE PRESIDENT AND I EXAMINED IS QUITE LARGE, APPROXIMATELY 8.85 METERS HIGH AND 14.23 METERS LONG. PEREZ SAID HE VERY MUCH WANTED IT LOCATED IN THE CITY OF WASHINGTON TO ENHANCE THE SYMBOLISM OF THE GIFT. I SUGGESTED THAT THE SIZE OF THE SCULPTURE MIGHT POSE PROBLEMS IN THAT REGARD BUT THE PRESIDENT WAS FIRM IN HIS PREFERENCE.

3. I SUBSEQUENTLY TOOK THE MATTER UP WITH MINISTER OF INFORMATION GUIDO GROSCOORS, POINTING OUT THAT THE ERECTION OF ANY OBJECT OF DECORATION OR ART IN WASHINGTON IS NOT A SIMPLE MATTER. GROSCOORS SAID THAT THE GOV MIGHT POSSIBLY CONSIDER SOME OTHER LOCATION BUT ONLY IF IT IS CLEAR THAT WASHINGTON CANNOT RECEIVE THE SCULPTURE. HE HAD BEEN IN TOUCH WITH OTERO WHO IS IN MEXICO FOR HIS EXHIBIT.
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THE PLAN NOW IS THAT OTERO WILL GO TO WASHINGTON ABOUT FEBUARY 4

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TO CONSULT ON THE PROJECT WITH AMBASSADOR BURELLI. AT MY SUGGESTION THEY WILL IN TURN CALL ON DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY LUERS TO DISCUSS HOW TO PROCEED FROM HERE.

4. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THE GOV IS PLANNING A NUMBER OF OTHER ACTIVITIES IN CONNECTION WITH THE BICENTENNIAL: THE ISSUANCE OF COMMEMORATIVE STAMPS, THE GIFT OF A STATUE OF FRANCISCO MIRANDA TO CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, A SPECIAL CEREMONY ON WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY, THE FUNDING OF A STUDY ON INFLUENCES AND CONTACTS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES IN THE REVOLUTIONARY ERA, AND MORE. PRESIDENT PEREZ IS PARTICULARLY ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT THE OTERO PROJECT AND I HOPE WE CAN AVOID DISAPPOINTING HIM.
SHLAUDEMAN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS, GIFTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 29 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976CARACA01055
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760034-0936
From: CARACAS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760111/aaaaaith.tel
Line Count: 74
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 19 JUL 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <19 JUL 2004 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <26 OCT 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

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US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GIFT OF VENEZUELAN SCULPTURE TO THE U.S.
TAGS: SCUL, VE, US, (PEREZ, CARLOS ANDRES), (OTERO, ALEJANDRO)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

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